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Commencement 2008: A Great Beginning

UB Law Forum

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Law School Report

Michelle M. Schwach '08 and Christina S. Kim '08



THE NEXT FIRST STEP

Yale legal historian urges graduates to confront ethical issues

Challenge, celebration and congratulations were the order of the day at UB Law School's 119th Commencement, held May 17 in the Center for the Arts. Degrees were awarded to 237 J.D. candidates and 18 master of laws candidates.

Professor Makau W. Mutua, just named as the Law School's permanent dean, issued the first challenge to the newly minted lawyers amassed in the auditorium. "From today onward," he said, "you will be forever known for your identity as a lawyer. Today begins the rest of your life, and today you must begin to contemplate in real terms the meaning of the phrase 'the rule of law.' Whether as a judge, prosecutor, plaintiff's attorney, criminal defense lawyer, public interest lawyer, policymaker or legal scholar, you will constantly have to ask yourself the meaning of the rule of law.

"Does it mean the peaceful settlement of disputes? If so, why do we still have the death penalty?

"Does it mean that we must rehabilitate those who have offended the rules of civilization so that they can become better human beings? If so, why do we have a violent prison culture that destroys instead of reforming?

"Does it mean the least among us deserves to be heard in a court of law? If so, why are so many unable to get justice?

"Does it mean equal justice under law? If so, why are the poor and the unpopular treated differently?"

Professor Lucinda M. Finley, bear-



ing greetings from the faculty as well as the University administration, urged the graduates to "join the growing ranks of Buffalo Believers" and advocate for the University's wide-ranging expansion plan. "The ambitious UB 2020 goal of securing UB's place as one of the great public research universities of the 21st century is interdependent with the excellence and premier status of its law alumni," she said. "UB Law is *the* law school of the state of New York, and we all must work together to ensure that it has the



Lucinda M. Finley, vice provost for faculty affairs and Frank G. Raichle Professor of Trial and Appellate Advocacy, conferred the degrees.

resources and commitments, including those from the state, necessary for it to flourish in that status."

After a welcome by UB Law Alumni Association President Margaret P. Gryko '77, the student address was given by graduating student Katie E. Woodruff.

"When we take that oath to uphold the laws of the U.S. Constitution," she said, "we are becoming part

“Law is a great engine for the enhancement of autonomy and life plans, and a defense against harassment and exploitation.”

—Robert W. Gordon, the Chancellor Kent Professor of Law and Legal History at Yale Law School



of an iconic and fundamental system of the United States. It was lawyers who created this country and lawyers who continue to run it today. We will hold someone's freedom, children, money, marriage or property in our hands. The one thing we can hold onto as we take this plunge into esquirehood is that UB has given us everything we need to practice.

“This has been a life-altering experience. For better or for worse, we are forever changed.”

She concluded with a quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.: “The world has its fling at lawyers sometimes, but its very denial is an admis-

sion. It feels, what I believe to be the truth, that of all secular professions this has the highest standards.”

The keynote address was given by Robert W. Gordon, the Chancellor Kent Professor of Law and Legal History at Yale Law School. Gordon, a former newspaper reporter turned legal historian, began his teaching career at UB Law School, where he

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From left: Professor Susan V. Mangold, Dean Makau W. Mutua and Professor Elizabeth B. Mensch '78

UB Law students receive Commencement awards

Jaclyn A. Patrignani and Minara Uddin '08



University at Buffalo Law School students received honors and awards at the school's 119th commencement ceremony, held on May 17. The award recipients are:

- **Tatiana Markel** of Brooklyn, the Max Koren Award, given to the graduate who exemplifies the highest standards of the profession by virtue of scholastic achievement, leadership and dedication to the ideals of the law. Markel also received the Judge William J. Regan Award for estates and surrogate's law.
- **Priscilla E. Hampton** of Lakewood, the John N. Bennett Achievement Award for the highest scholastic achievement in the graduating class. Hampton also received the Charles Dautch Award for real property and the Judge William J. Regan Award for estates and surrogate's law.
- **Regina L. Readling** of Binghamton, the Dale S. Margulis Award for having contributed the most to the UB Law School and the community.
- **Robert A. Crawford** of Lake View, the American Law Institute-American Bar Association Scholarship and Leadership Award.

- **Matthew D. Valauri** of New Canaan, Conn., the American Bankruptcy Institute Medal for Excellence in Bankruptcy.
- **Danielle E. Drayer** of Bellmore, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Health Law.
- **Terrance M. McGuinness** of Endwell, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Health Law.
- **Shelly P. Tsai** of Buffalo, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Health Law.
- **Kristina M. Hellman** of Jamestown, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Intellectual Property Law.
- **Peter M. Jay** of Williamsville, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Intellectual Property Law.
- **David A. Goldberg** of Buffalo, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Labor and Employment Law.
- **Kristi M. Rich** of Cohoes, the Ameri-

can Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Labor and Employment Law.

- **Dwight E. Kanyuck** of Rochester, the Birzon Prize in Clinical Legal Studies.
- **Christopher N. Olinick** of Buffalo, the Charles Dautch Award for real property.

- **Elizabeth Pascal** of Clarence, the Professor Louis DelCotto Award for taxation.

- **Kathleen S. Weber** of Cheektowaga, the Professor Louis DelCotto Award for taxation and the Justice M. Dolores Denman scholarship/award for a custodial parent.

- **Brittany Lee Penberthy** of Tonawanda, the Maurice Frey Award for family law.

- **Harold T. Babcock-Ellis** of Fewa Bush, the Edith and David Goldstein Award for debtor-creditor and bankruptcy law.

- **Jonathan H. Bard** of Tonawanda, the Tom Headrick "Trees and Forest" Award for corporate finance.

- **Seth T. Molisani** of Canandaigua, the Adolf Homburger Law Alumni Association Award for civil procedure.

- **Marissa A. Coheley** of Buffalo, the Judge Matthew J. Jasen Appellate Practice Award for appellate advocacy. Coheley also was elected a member of the Order of Barristers, a national honor society for oralists.

- **Craig J. Austin** of Marilla, the David Kochery Award for service to the student community and courses in procedures and remedies, and a Robert Connelly Trial Technique Award.

- **Mary C. Stermole** of Corning, the Laidlaw Law Alumni Association Award for commercial law and the Moot Evidence Award.

- **Adam R. O'Brian** of Arlington, Va., the Professor Virginia Leary Award, presented in honor of Leary, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita in the UB Law School, who taught international law and developed the sequence of courses and externships in international law at the school. O'Brian also was elected a member of the Order

of Barristers, a national honor society for oralists.

- **Thomas M. Zambito** of East Amherst, the Albert R. Mugel Award for future interests and estate planning.

- **Gregory P. Stein** of Buffalo, the Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award. Stein also was elected a member of the Order of Barristers, a national honor society for oralists.

- **Jennifer C. Jones** of Fort Wayne, Ind., the Ryan J. Mullins Award for criminal law and the Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award.

- **Elliott H. Kowalski** of Amherst, the Harry A. Rachlin Prize in Real Property Law and Real Estate Transactions.

- **Sam L. Valleriani** of Rochester, the James M. Kieffer Trial Excellence Award and the Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award.

- **Jennifer M. Pacella** of Blasdell, the New York State Bar Association Ethics Award.

- **Brian Holland** of Amherst, the Carlos C. Alden Award for service to the *Buffalo Law Review*.

- **Jeffrey P. Gleason** of Baldwinsville, the Justice Philip Halpern Award for writing on the *Buffalo Law Review*.

- **Amber L. Kerling** of Cuba, N.Y., the Linda S. Reynolds Award for commitment to equal justice for the poor.

- **Evan Y. Bussiere** of Buffalo, the Milton Kaplan Law and Social Development Award for exceptional commitment to the study of law and social development in an American, comparative or international context.

- **Elsa Hernandez** of East Elmhurst, the Kenneth A. Gomez Memorial Award for equality and justice for minorities.

- **Alexander Y. Karsten** of Buffalo, the Activist's Gavel for progressive politics, government accountability and social activism.

- **Candice R. Giles** of Amherst, the Women Lawyers of Western New York Award.

- **Cynthia D. Gross** of Snyder, the Na-



Linwood Roberts Jr. '08 and daughter Sasha Lynn

tional Association of Women Lawyers Award.

- **Emily G. Conley** of Williamsville, the UB Law Alumni Association GOLD Group Award for leadership and excellence.

- **Lauren M. Fitzgerald** of Buffalo, the American Bar Association/Bureau of National Affairs Award for Excellence in the Study of Labor and Employment Law.

Receiving the Minority Bar Association of Western New York Award were **Stephanie J. Calhoun** of Buffalo, **John E. Mancebo** of Ossining and **Janelle L. Whitaker** of Niagara Falls.

The Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award was presented to:

- **Lisa A. Ball** of Tonawanda.

- **Kristofer J. Kasnicki** of Garden City.

- **Mark R. Affronti** of Depew.

- **Julia C. Brylinski** of Orchard Park.

- **Kevin M. Habberfield** of Scio.

- **Joshua S. Hurwit** of Schenectady.

- **André L. Lindsay** of Amherst.

- **James Lonano** of Staten Island.

- **Jose B. Velez Goveo** of Dorado, Puerto Rico.

- **Linwood Roberts** of Brooklyn.

Newly elected members of the Order of Barristers, a national honor society for oralists, are:

- **Jacqueline A. Bain** of Vestal.

- **Kimberly A. Georger** of Buffalo.

- **Lori B. Gradwell** of Buffalo.

- **James E. Lonano** of Staten Island.

- **Erin A. Tubbs** of Buffalo.

- **Elliott J. Veloso** of Silver Creek.

- **Brian Wisniewski** of Lancaster.

Graduating seniors who participated in UB Law's Hurricane Katrina Service Project were recognized with Law Faculty Awards. The students studied the specific events surrounding Hurricane Katrina; legal issues in disaster preparedness, disaster response and disaster relief; and FEMA case law. During their week in New Orleans, they vol-

unteered in three offices. Students in the New Orleans Office of the Public Defender worked on criminal cases that have been pending since before the storm. In the offices of the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corp., students helped resolve cases involving predatory practices that were rampant in the aftermath of the hurricane. Students also volunteered at the Alliance for Affordable Energy, which leads the region's sustainable redevelopment effort.

Receiving Faculty Law Awards were:

- **Teia Marie Bui** of Buffalo.

- **Timothy W. Bush** of Brockport.

- **Jeffrey P. Gleason** of Baldwinsville.

- **Rakshita Koirala** of Woodside.

- **Elliot H. Kowalski** of Amherst.

- **Tatiana Markel** of Brooklyn.

- **Christina M. Meyers** of East Amherst.

- **Burton W. Phillips** of Baldwinsville.

- **Regina L. Readling** of Binghamton.

- **Amanda L. Tuberdyck** of Buffalo.

- **Janelle L. Whitaker** of Niagara Falls.

- **Anne E. Wilson** of Grand Island.

- **Gary A. Wilson** of Buffalo.

Graduating seniors who volunteered for "A Day of Renewal" for residents and clients of Haven House received New York State Bar Association/Law Student Bar Association Achievement Awards. The students were **Emily G. Conley** of Williamsville, **Candice R. Giles** of Amherst, **Abby Oliver** of Pulaski and **Minara Uddin** of Flushing.

Law School Report



SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Elizabeth B. Mensch '78 attended her final commencement before retiring.



SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Kenneth F. Joyce

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served from 1971 to 1977.

"UB was my first job in law teaching, and I still think of it as my best job ever," he said. "No enterprise I have been involved with since has given me such sustained excitement."

He went on to sketch out some of the professional choices the graduating class will face. "The law is very unusual in the staggering range of its opportunities and its dangers," he said. "Practicing law gives opportunities to do both great good and great harm. The occupation of lawyer is an eminently useful one. We give practical advice at crucial moments to people who are often in much worse trouble than they deserve. Law is a great engine for the enhancement of autonomy and life plans, and a defense against harassment and exploitation."

Gordon cited two real-world ex-



University President Emeritus and Professor William R. Greiner

amples of legal situations in which lawyers had to make ethical choices: Justice Department attorneys who were asked to advise the government on the legality of severe treatment of detainees in the war on terrorism; and letters "written by eminent law firms" on behalf of the Enron Corp. – letters which enabled the sham financial transactions that eventually brought the company down and erased the pensions of thousands of stockholders.



"We are not talking about lawyers who are bottom feeders at the fringes of their profession, lawyers whose only office is a cell phone and who hang around in the back of courtrooms trying to drum up business, but lawyers with very fancy resumes and graduates of distinguished law schools," he said.

The good news, Gordon said, is that "for every instance of lawyers caving in to that pressure, there were others who did not."

"There are choices to be made in how to live in this profession," he concluded. "Nobody ever regrets having been of concrete help to people in trouble. Nobody regrets trying to make our justice system more effective and efficient."

Prior to the awarding of prizes and degrees, Mutua recognized the Class of 1958, many of whom were in attendance on the dais, and noted that on that very day they had presented him with a gift to the Law School in the amount of \$58,000. Next year, he said, they had challenged the Class of '59 to do the math and make their own gift.

Receiving Latin honors

Summa cum laude

Robert A. Crawford, Priscilla E. Hampton, Tatiana Markel, Thomas M. Zambito.

Magna cum laude

Jennifer L. Buchner, Marissa A. Coheley, Brian Holland, Glenn D. Howard, Courtney R. Huckle, Dwight E. Kanyuck, Kristopher J. Kasnicki, Naz Khan, Elliot H. Kowalski, Michael D. Libretto, Christine M. Meyers, Steven C. Mindy, Adam R. O'Brian, Jennifer M. Pacella, Elizabeth Pascal, Christina M. Petrella, Joseph J. Polniak Jr., Vanessa N. Pritchard, Regina L. Readling, Kristi M. Rich, Manik J. Saini, Gregory P. Stein, Jenna S. Strazzulla, Jon R.R. Wilson.

Cum laude

Mark R. Affronti, Craig J. Austin, Harold T. Babcock-Ellis, Jonathan H. Bard, Elizabeth M. Barnett, Vineeta S. Baronos, Kyle P. Barrett, Julia C. Brylinski, Benjamin S. Carlisle, Jennifer S. Castaldo, Daniel J. Christiansen, Erin E. Cole, Alexander C. Collichio, Jennifer M. Donlan, Liam A. Dwyer,

Shannon C. Elwell, Tara S. Evans, Joshua E. Fingold, Kimberly A. Georger, Candice R. Giles, Jeffrey P. Gleason, David A. Goldberg, Kevin M. Habberfield, Daniel T. Horner, Joshua S. Hurwit, Jennifer C. Jones, Alexander Y. Karsten, Jennifer L. Buchalter Katz, Amy L. Kedron, Amber L. Kerling, Christina S. Kim, Michelle A. Koled, Daniel P. Kuhn, Leigh A. Kwiatek, Joseph P. Lannon, Clayton J. Lenhardt, Amanda L.



Asha (Kristin) Patel '08

Lowe, John T. Lynch, Michael H. McMahon II, Brian D. Miller, Jackson E. Minich, Ryan M. Murphy, Theo Nickerson, Sunny W. Noh, Christopher N. Ollinick, Asha (Kristin) Patel, Daniel J. Pautz, Abraham J. Platt, Robert E. Quinn, Jessica M. Seay, Stephanie R. Seitz, Robert A. Shaw, Michael D. Smith, Sarah H. Sprague, Lindsay M. Swensen, Nicholas J. Tardif, Amanda L. Tuberdyck, Sam L. Valleriani, Ehret A. Van Horn, Elliott J. Veloso, Kathleen S. Weber, John M. Wells, Anne E. Wilson, Xin L. Zhu, Rochelle K. Zimpfer.

Master of Laws degree with honors

Karen M. Aavik, Zongyuan Fan, Jimmine L. Haigler, Eduardo H.S. Machado, Oscar E. Miranda-Miller, Jamie Nobles, Tomasz Podstepski, Radhika P. Varavenkatamaram, Jose B. Velez Goveo.